

# Dennie Oxley

Indiana State Representative, District 73



Summer, 2001

Dear Friends:

The 2001 session of the Indiana General Assembly has ended with the passage of a new state budget and several other important pieces of legislation. I am pleased we completed our work on time in a bipartisan manner.

The new two-year state budget includes increased funding for education, CHOICE and other important programs while avoiding a general tax increase. The budget also includes funding for several important local projects.

We passed several other laws that will benefit our state in a variety of areas, including health care, education, crime, election reform and environmental protection. We made improvements to our license branch operations and passed legislation that will protect consumers from annoying telephone calls with the establishment of a do-not-call list. I have described many of these new laws in the next few pages.

We are required to redraw the district boundaries every 10 years due to population shifts. I welcome those of you who are new to the district and look forward to working with you in the coming months to make Indiana a better place to live.

Please contact my office if you have additional concerns or questions about state government. You may e-mail me at [H73@ai.org](mailto:H73@ai.org) or call toll-free at 1-800-382-9842.

Sincerely,

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# New budget increases school support, local development

Going into the 2001 legislative session, many observers felt that a sluggish economy would make it difficult to enact a biennial state budget without either passing a general tax increase or cutting funding for critical areas like public education. However, through the hard work and long hours of the Ways and Means committee, of which I am a member, we managed to craft a budget bill that continues our record of avoiding general tax increases, while providing additional state support to our schools, health care and local projects.

The final version of House Enrolled Act 1001 enables the state to increase support for public schools across Indiana by an average of 3.5 percent each of the next two fiscal years, with minimum guarantees built in to help schools avoid cutting programs and personnel. Funding for higher education was increased by an average of 3.2 percent each year.

## Services and local development

The budget includes additional funding for the CHOICE program that provides in-home care services for the elderly and disabled, as well as Build Indiana Fund support for research and technology, community wastewater and drinking water grants, airport development and improvements to voting systems.

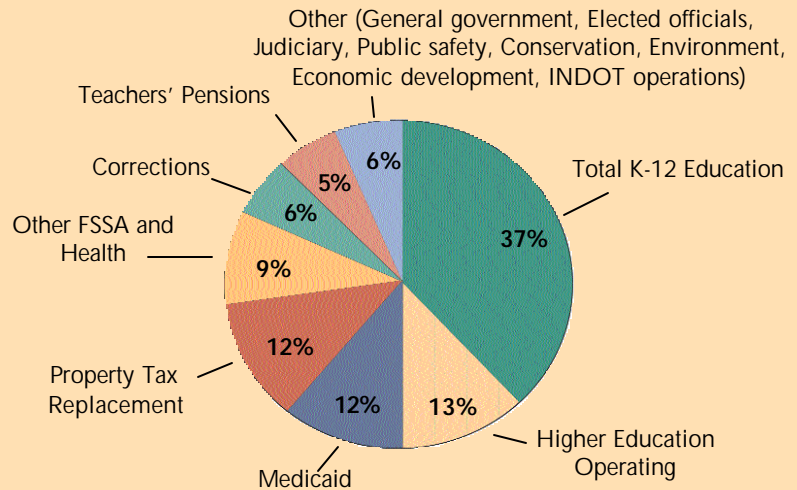
## Tax relief

It was disappointing that we were unable to provide the levels of tax relief that were included in past state budgets, but I am pleased that we were able to extend the life of the homestead credit at 10 percent and maintain the earned income tax credit that assists working families on lower incomes.

Businesses and farms will receive an income tax credit on personal property beginning in 2003, and mobile homes have been changed to be treated as real property with similar deductions. The budget bill continues to fund a statewide property tax relief program that now takes about 16 percent off all property taxes. When coupled with the 10 percent homestead credit, that translates to savings of around 26 percent.

A bill the size of the budget does not contain everything I would like, but considering the fiscal restraints facing legislators going into the 2001 session, I feel this budget is a major accomplishment.

## Spending highlights from the 2001-2003 budget



## License branch improvements



REP. O'LEARY ADDRESSES THE HOUSE.

Patrons and employees of license branches will be pleased with changes enacted by the Legislature this year. Those changes should make the process of going to the license branch more efficient.

House Enrolled Act 1170 contains the following changes: Drivers will be able to renew their licenses through the mail and over the Internet, and will be able to register their vehicles in any county. Vehicle registration deadlines will be staggered and come twice a month to reduce lines. Additionally, the state will have to conduct a public hearing before closing any license branch. In addition, transaction fees will increase by 50 cents to finance technological improvements.

## Stay connected with e-mail updates

Would you like to receive e-mail updates on legislative issues and other matters important to our district? I am pleased to offer this service through my legislative office.

Simply e-mail ([H73@ai.org](mailto:H73@ai.org)) or call my office (1-800-382-9842) and I will add you to this list.





# Economic development is a top priority

The major economic development initiative to come out of the 2001 legislative session is contained in House Enrolled Act 1962, which creates the **Skills 2016 Job Training Program**.

Workers already on the job would be able to get access to additional instruction to **gain new skills**, while those people just entering the work force would be able to take part in improved industrial and building trades programs offered through such locations as Ivy Tech State College and Vincennes University.

This program can provide easier access to the instruction and materials that can help our working men and women adapt to the needs of a market-

place that is looking for new types of goods and services.

Since 1997, Hoosiers on moderate and lower incomes have had the chance to use the **Individual Development Account** (IDA) program to pursue the dream of buying a home, starting a business or going to college. House Enrolled Act 2130 makes that program permanent and expands eligibility requirements to those earning 175 percent of the federal income poverty level.

By setting aside some of their own money, people in the program can obtain state matching funds that can help them own a home, start or invest in a small business or send a son or

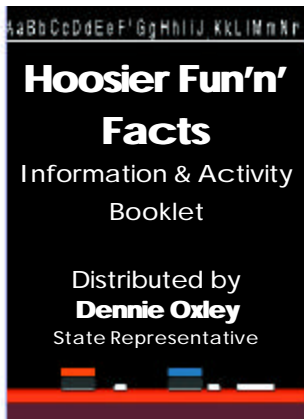


REP. OXLEY DISCUSSES LEGISLATION WITH REP. PAT BAUER (D - SOUTH BEND).

daughter to college.

Finally, through Senate Enrolled Act 160, the state will begin to form a comprehensive economic development policy to help improve the quality of life in rural Indiana.

## Publications available from Representative Oxley



Numerous publications are available free-of-charge by calling my Statehouse office at **1-800-382-9842**.

**Hoosier Fun and Facts** — Designed for elementary school-aged children, this information and activity book teaches students about their state through a combination of text, puzzles and other educational activities.

**Relax...** — This informational booklet for senior citizens

discusses a variety of issues, from taxes to health problems to leisure activities.

**Higher Education** — A 24 page publication for those interested in pursuing a higher education degree, detailing many Indiana colleges and universities as well as occupational and vocational schools.

**Guide to State Agencies** — This booklet details various agencies within Indiana state government, listing phone numbers, functions and general areas of responsibility for each of the state agencies.

**Don't Be a Victim** — This booklet offers helpful tips and

other information on how to avoid being a victim of a scam. Some highlights include tips for avoiding telephone, mail and other types of scams.

**Women's Health** — Developed to offer tips to women on health issues, this short booklet encourages women to maintain a healthy lifestyle. The booklet also offers information about diseases which affect women.

**Digest of Enactments** — Details on the bills that were passed during the 2001 legislative session.

### **Also available:**

**Get out and Go Map** — A handy directory to u-pick farms, roadside markets and other attractions throughout the state, placed on a map for easy access.

**The Indiana Travel Guide** — The Indiana Travel Guide offers a wealth of ideas on how to spend the summer in our state.

**The Festival Guide** — A listing of the many special events taking place this year that showcase Indiana's food, music and culture.

**The 2001 Indiana State Guide to Fishing Regulations** — A comprehensive listing of the state's rules and regulations, including information on getting a license, along with a county-by-county breakdown on the best fishing spots in Indiana.



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## Privacy from telemarketers and election reform

Stay informed about these  
and other issues online with  
Representative Oxley



Web: [www.in.gov/R73](http://www.in.gov/R73)

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In 2001, lawmakers took steps to help reduce the interruption of telemarketers calling you at home. Through House Enrolled Act 1222, you will be able to have your name placed on a do-not-call list that will **prohibit most solicitors from contacting you via the telephone**. To be placed on the list, contact the Office of the Indiana Attorney General about the **Telephone Privacy List** at 1-888-834-9969.

In the wake of the confusion that took place in the presidential election in Florida last fall, lawmakers in Indiana moved quickly to enact reforms that will change the way we handle elections here.

Senate Enrolled Act 268 gives counties the ability to enter into agreements with the state to purchase **upgraded voting equipment**. This allows counties to take

advantage of the state's ability to purchase large amounts of equipment and materials at discounted prices. Funds contained in the biennial state budget will help the state provide 50 percent matching grants to further reduce those costs. The same legislation also **eliminates the use of punch-card voting** in future elections.

Through provisions contained in House Enrolled Act 1510, the state has moved closer to improving voter registration in Indiana. The Indiana Election Division will make a **voter registration form available on the Internet** that people can download, fill out and mail in to be processed. The legislation also strives to update lists of eligible voters by removing names of people who are deceased and convicted felons who are in prison.